



Famous Kentuckians

Explorers, Pioneers & Frontiersmen

Judge Roy Bean (1825-1903) – Infamous "hanging judge" of Langtry, Texas.

Daniel Boone* (1734-1820) – Hunted and explored Kentucky, 1767-74; cleared the Wilderness Road and founded Fort Boonesborough, 1775.

James Bowie (1796-1836) – Hero of the Alamo, designer of the Bowie knife.

Kit Carson (1809-1868) – Indian agent, trapper, scout.

George Rogers Clark* (1752-1818) – American Revolution frontier general and explorer, secured the NW Territory for the U.S., founder of Louisville, 1778.

Floyd Collins (1887-1925) – Explorer whose entrapment and death in a cave became one of the most widely reported stories of the decade.

James Harrod* (1742-1793) – Frontiersman, founder of Harrodsburg, first permanent settlement west of the Alleghenies, 1774.

Simon Kenton* (1755-1836) – Frontier explorer, soldier, scout for Daniel Boone and George Rogers Clark.

Dr. Thomas Walker* (1715-1794) – Led the first documented expedition through Cumberland Gap, 1750.

*Not born in Kentucky

Political Leaders

Alben W. Barkley (1877-1956) – U.S. Vice President under Harry Truman, 1949-53.

John Cabell Breckinridge (1872-1920) – U.S. Vice President under James Buchanan, 1857-61.

Louis Brandeis (1856-1941) – U.S. Supreme Court Justice, 1916-39.

A.B. "Happy" Chandler (1898-1991) – Two time governor (1935-1939 and 1955-1959) U.S. Senator (1939-1945)

Cassius Marcellus Clay (1810-1903) – The Lion of White Hall, Ambassador to Russia, abolitionist, a founder of the Republican Party.

Henry Clay* (1777-1852) – The Great Compromiser, U.S. senator, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. secretary of state.

Martha Layne Collins (1936-) – First female Kentucky governor, 1983-87.

John Sherman Cooper (1901-1991) – U.S. senator, ambassador to India and East Germany, member of the Warren Commission.

Jefferson Davis (1808-1889) – Only President of the Confederate States of America, 1861-65.

John Marshall Harlan (1833-1911) – U.S. Supreme Court Justice, 1877-1911.

Richard M. Johnson (1780-1850) – U.S. Vice-President under Martin Van Buren, 1837-41.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) – 16th U.S. President, 1861-65.

Adlai Stevenson (1835-1914) – U.S. Vice-President under Grover Cleveland, 1893-97.

Zachary Taylor* (1784-1850) – 12th U.S. President, 1849-1850.

Frederick Moore Vinson (1890-1953) – U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice, 1946-53.

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Military & Social Leaders

Daniel Carter Beard* (1850-1941) – Founded Boy Scouts of America, 1910.

Madeline McDowell Breckinridge (1872-1920) – National leader in women's suffrage movement.

Anna Mac Clarke (1919-1944) – WAC who was the first black officer to command a white unit.

Mary Desha (1850-1911) – Co-founded the Daughters of the American Revolution.

John "Casey" Jones (1864-1900) – Railroad engineer.

Mary Todd Lincoln (1818-1882) – Wife of Abraham Lincoln.

McCoys of the Hatfield-McCoy feud, resolved in 1888.

John Hunt Morgan* (1825-1864) – The Thunderbolt of the Confederacy, Confederate general.

Carrie A. Nation (1846-1911) – Temperance crusader known as "the lady with a hatchet".

Colonel Harland Sanders* (1890-1980) – Kentucky Fried Chicken founder.

John Thomas Scopes (1900-1970) – Defendant in famous "monkey Trial" for violating a Tennessee law against teaching evolution.

Franklin R. Sousley, PFC (1925-1945) – Helped raise the U.S. flag at Iwo Jima; immortalized in the most famous war photograph in history.

Cora Wilson Stewart (1875-1958) – Educator whose school for adult education became a model throughout the world.

Whitney M. Young, Jr. (1921-1971) – Civil rights leader; director of the National Urban League, 1961-71; awarded Medal of Freedom, 1969.

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Scientists, Inventors & Physicians

Ephraim McDowell* (1771-1830) – Performed first successful surgical removal of an ovarian tumor, 1809.

Garrett A. Morgan (1877-1963) – Invented first automatic, tri-color traffic signal, 1923.

Thomas Hunt Morgan (1866-1945) – Nobel Prize winner in medicine for genetic research, 1933.

Matthew B. Sellers* (1869-1932) – Among first to experiment with gliding and power flight.

Phillip A. Sharp (1944-) – Nobel Prize winner for the discovery of split genes and for advancing research on cancer and hereditary diseases, 1993.

Nathan B. Stubblefield (1860-1928) – Successfully demonstrated wireless voice transmission (radio), 1892.

John T. Thompson (1860-1940) – Inventor of the Tommygun machine gun.

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Artists & Architects

John James Audubon* – Ornithologist, artist. Began his work on "Birds of America" in Kentucky.

Frank Duveneck – Painter, sculptor, educator.

Fontaine Fox – Originated the nationally syndicated cartoon "The Toonerville Trolley".

Matthew Harris Jouette – Portrait artist.

Paul Sawyer* – Landscape artist known for scenes of Frankfort and the Kentucky River.

Gideon Shyrock – Architect: introduced Greek Revival style to the "West".

Moneta J. Sleet, Jr. – First black American to win Pulitzer Prize in photography, 1969.

Helen M. Turner – Impressionistic landscape artist, portraitist.

Enid Yandell – First female member of the National Sculpture Society.

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Authors & Journalists

James Lane Allen – "The Choir Invisible," "A Kentucky Cardinal"
Harriett Simpson Arnow – "The Dollmaker," "Hunter's Horn"
Wendell E. Berry – Poet/novelist/environmentalist
William Wells Brown – America's first black novelist
Harry Caudill – Political writer "Night Comes to the Cumberlands", "The Mountain, the Miner and the Lord"
Edgar Cayce – Psychic counselor/author
Thomas D. Clark* – Historian laureate of Kentucky
Nick Clooney – News anchor
Irvin S. Cobb – Journalist/humorist/short story writer
Joe Creason – Journalist
John Fox, Jr. – "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come"
Janice Holt Giles* – "The Kentuckian," "The Enduring Hills"
A.B. Guthrie, Jr.* – Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist
Duncan Hines – Restaurant-guide publisher
Annie Fellows Johnston* – "The Little Colonel" series
Barbara Kingsolver – Novelist
Bobbie Ann Mason – Novelist
Ed McClanahan – Novelist
Thomas Merton* – Essayist on spiritual and social issues
J.T. Cotton Noe – Kentucky's first poet laureate, 1926
Marsha Norman – Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright
Theodore O'Hara – "Bivouac of the Dead"
John Ed Pearce* – Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist
Alice Hegan Rice – "Mrs. Wiggins of the Cabbage Patch"
Elizabeth Madox Roberts – "The Time of Man," "The Great Meadow"
Diane Sawyer – TV journalist/commentator
Effie Waller Smith – "Rhymes from the Cumberland"
James Still* – "River of Earth," "The Wolfpen Poems"
Jesse Stuart – Author/educator/poet laureate of Kentucky
Allen Tate – Critic/poet/novelist
Hunter S. Thompson – "Gonzo" Journalist and political commentator
Helen Thomas Journalist – UPI White House Bureau Chief
Robert Penn Warren – Pulitzer Prize 1947, 1958, 1979

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Entertainers

Ned Beatty - Actor
Foster Brooks – Comedian
Laura Bell Bundy - Actress
John Carpenter - Producer/director
Steven Curtis Chapman - Singer
George Clooney - Actor
Rosemary Clooney - Singer
John Conlee - Singer
William Conrad - Actor
J.D. Crowe - Singer
Billy Ray Cyrus - Singer
Jackie De Shannon - Singer
Johnny Depp - Actor
Irene Dunne - Actress
Don & Phil Everly - Singers
Heather R. French - Miss America 1999-2000
Rebecca Gayheart - Actress
Crystal Gayle - Singer
Haven Gillespie - Songwriter
Lillian Gish - Actress
D.W. Griffith - Movie producer
Tom T. Hall - Singer
Lionel Hampton - Musician
Larnell Harris - Singer
Kentucky Headhunters - Musicians
Grandpa (Louis Marshall) Jones - Musician, comedian, songwriter
Ashley Judd - Actress
Naomi Judd - Singer
Wynonna Judd - Singer
Lily May Ledford - Musician, songwriter
Brian Littrell - Singer
Patty Loveless - Singer
Loretta Lynn - Singer
Lee Majors - Actor
Bill Monroe - Singer
John Michael Montgomery - Singer
Patricia Neal - Actress
Joan Osborne - Singer
Annie Potts - Actress
Boots Randolph - Musician
Kevin Richardson - Singer
Jeanie Ritchie - Singer
Ricky Skaggs - Singer
Mary Travers - Singer
Merle Travis - Singer
Steve Wariner - Singer
Keith Whitley - Singer
Dwight Yoakum - Singer

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Sports Personalities

Muhammad Ali - Boxing
Don Brumfield - Jockey
Jim Bunning - Baseball
Steve Cauthen - Jockey
A.B. "Happy" Chandler - Baseball
Denny Crum* - Basketball
Darrell Griffith - Basketball
Paul Hornung - Football
Tamara McKinney - Skiing
Mary Meagher - Swimming
Isaac Burns Murphy – Jockey
Rick Pitino* – Basketball
Pee Wee Reese - Baseball
Adolph Rupp* - Basketball
Woody Stephens - Horse trainer
Danny Sullivan - Auto racing
Wes Unseld - Basketball
Darrell Waltrip - Auto racing
Michael Waltrip - Auto racing

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